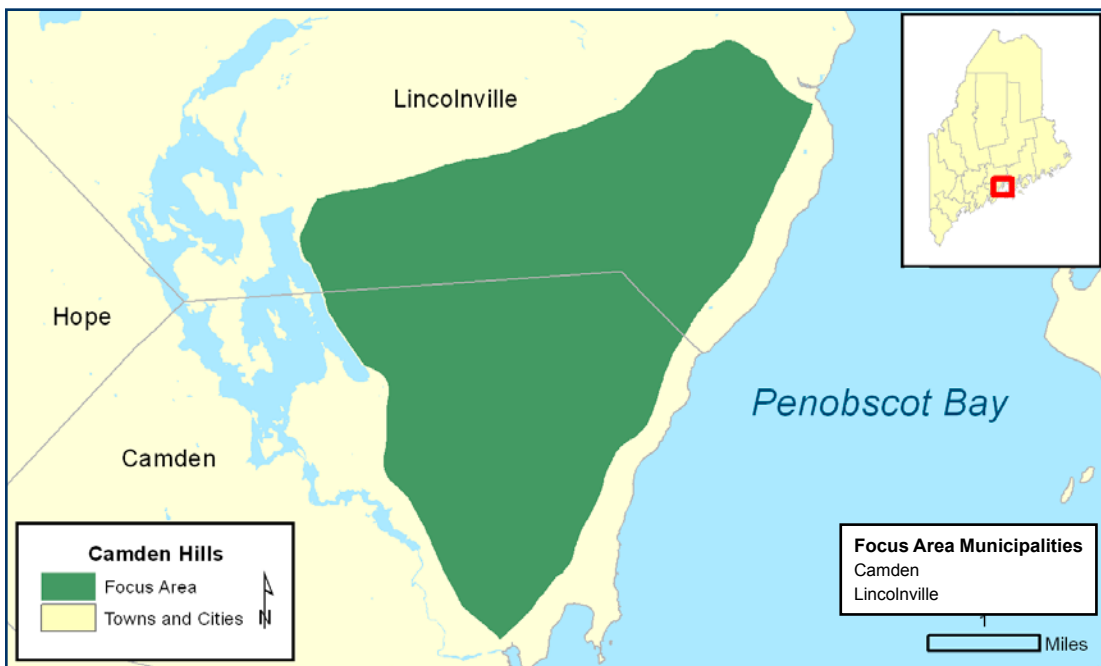
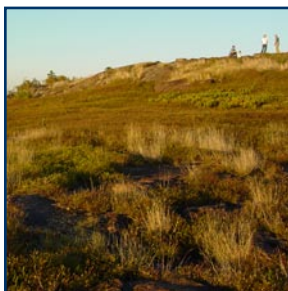
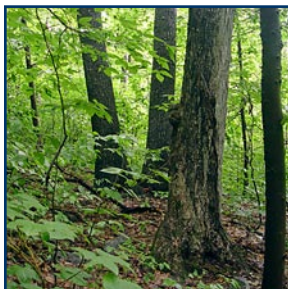
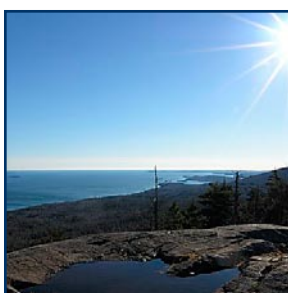
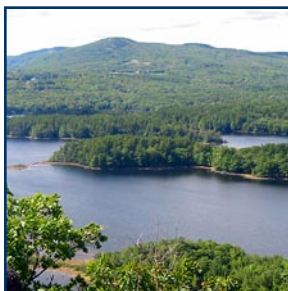


Camden Hills



WHY IS THIS AREA SIGNIFICANT?

The summits, ledges, and forests of the Camden Hills form an ecologically rich area with high recreational and scenic values. Camden Hills State Park supports several natural communities of statewide significance. The Focus Area has large blocks of roadless forest, which are unusual in midcoast Maine.

Rare and Exemplary Natural Communities

Birch–Oak Rocky Woodland
Oak–Ash Woodland
Oak–Northern Hardwoods Forest
Low-elevation Bald

Significant Wildlife Habitats

Inland Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitat
Deer Wintering Area

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSERVATION

- » Work with willing landowners to permanently protect remaining undeveloped areas.
- » Encourage town planners to improve approaches to development that may impact Focus Area functions.
- » Look for potential signs of nesting by peregrine falcons, which have been seen flying near Maiden Cliff.
- » Educate recreational users about the ecological and economic benefits provided by the Focus Area.

For more conservation opportunities, visit the Beginning with Habitat Online Toolbox: www.beginningwithhabitat.org/toolbox/about_toolbox.html.

Public Access Opportunity

- » Camden Hills State Park

Photo credits, top to bottom: Coastal Mountains Land Trust, Kate Doiron, Don Cameron, Coastal Mountains Land Trust, Kate Doiron



Kate Doiron

FOCUS AREA OVERVIEW

The summits, ledges, and forests of the Camden Hills form an ecologically rich area with high recreational and scenic values. Camden Hills State Park forms the core of a nearly 6,000-acre block of largely undeveloped land just north of the village of Camden. The state park supports several natural communities of statewide significance, including an acidic rocky summit, spruce woodland, oak-pine woodland, and oak-beech forest. The town-owned Millerite Ledges and Maiden Cliff lie immediately west of Camden Hills State Park and east of Lake Megunticook.

Perhaps the most striking features of the Camden Hills are the open summit ledges of Mt. Battie, Mt. Megunticook, and the Millerite Ledges. These peaks support open balds (acidic rocky summit communities) with scattered, stunted red oak (*Quercus rubra*) trees and shrubs of mountain ash (*Sorbus americana*) and chokeberry (*Photinia melanocarpa*). Other characteristic plant species of these open summits include three-leaved cinquefoil (*Sibbaldiopsis tridentata*), bristly sarsaparilla (*Aralia hispida*), pink corydalis (*Corydalis sempervirens*), hairgrass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*), and bear-berry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*).

Several sites within and adjacent to the park support plant communities indicative of basic or alkaline soil conditions. These conditions result from the unique bedrock composi-

Ecological Services of the Focus Area

- Protects headwater streams that flow into Colman and Norton Ponds and Megunticook Lake
- Provides productive source habitat for numerous wildlife species
- Harbors valuable deer wintering habitat

Economic Contributions of the Focus Area

- The state park and surrounding undeveloped lands are a major tourism draw.
- Recreational trails offer year-round opportunities and support local businesses.
- Large unfragmented forests provide a viable source of renewable energy and timber.
- Scenic quality of undeveloped ridge lines increase local property values.

tion of the area. Ultramafic bedrock—igneous rock containing magnesium silicates—is scattered among the dominant, typically more acidic, sedimentary bedrock of the area. One such plant community occurs at the northwestern end of the Millerite Ledges, as the trail drops down toward Maiden Cliff. Rock outcrops amid the oak forest in this location support wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), sweet cicely (*Osmorhiza claytonii*), spring beauty (*Claytonia caroliniana*), hepatica (*Hepatica nobilis* v. *obtusata*), early saxifrage (*Saxifraga virginensis*), herb robert (*Geranium robertianum*), rusty woodsia (*Woodsia ilvensis*), and flat-leaved sedge (*Carex platyphylla*). While none of these plants are rare in Maine, many are quite uncommon in the midcoast area.

Below Maiden Cliff, the steep, talus slope hosts other rich-woods species, such as spikenard (*Aralia racemosa*), poison ivy (*Toxicodendron rydbergii*), round-leaved dogwood (*Cornus rugosa*), and jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*). A few plant species typical of dry woods and talus also occur there, including small-flowered bitter-cress (*Cardamine parviflora*) and Drummond's rock-cress (*Arabis drummondii*).

In the northern part of the Focus Area, Derry Mountain supports a small but outstanding oak-pine woodland dominated by red oak (*Quercus rubra*). Roadless woodlands of this size are increasingly uncommon in midcoast Maine.

CONSERVATION CONSIDERATIONS

- » Roadless blocks of this size and condition are increasingly uncommon in coastal Maine. With Camden Hills State Park as a core, this Focus Area provides an excellent opportunity to protect landscape-scale ecological functions and values. Particular attention should be given to protecting large parcels adjacent to already protected lands.
- » The Coastal Mountains have experienced rapid growth in recent years, and many of the upland areas are under increasing threat. Growth and sprawl in rural areas contribute to habitat fragmentation, water quality degradation, and the spread of invasive plant species.
- » In the Focus Area, nearly all known sites with exemplary natural communities lie within existing conservation lands.
- » Many of the higher-elevation oak forests in this region—particularly stands facing the east and southeast—were heavily damaged by the January 1998 ice storm. Some landowners undertook heavy salvage cuts to offset possible economic loss. Woodlot owners considering such options should be encouraged to develop a long-term forest management plan with the guidance of a licensed forester.
- » Forests more than a century old are becoming scarce in Maine. Retention of old forest stands and characteristics, such as coarse woody debris and standing snags, may augment habitat diversity and value.
- » Both of the rare plants seen historically in the Focus Area, purple clematis and American chestnut, have not been found there in over 30 years. They probably still grow in the area, but specific locations must be verified before further conservation activity is warranted.
- » On two occasions in the last decade, peregrine falcons have been seen around Maiden Cliff during breeding season, but no nests were observed. The area could be monitored during breeding season for possible future nesting activity.
- » Camden Hills State Park is the most visited state park in Maine. The trail network in the state park and on surrounding town and private lands receives moderate to heavy use. Some management in the form of signs and/or interpretive materials may be helpful to limit damage to sensitive habitats such as open summits.



Top: Low-elevation bald natural community. Don Cameron



Above: Inland wading bird and waterfowl habitat. Rich Bard

RARE SPECIES AND EXEMPLARY NATURAL COMMUNITIES OF THE FOCUS AREA

Natural Communities	Common Name	Scientific Name	State Status*	State Rarity Rank	Global Rarity Rank
	Birch–Oak Rocky Woodland	Birch–Oak Talus Woodland		S3	G3G5
	Oak–Ash Woodland	Ironwood–Oak–Ash Woodland		S3	G3G5
	Oak–Northern Hardwoods Forest	Red oak–Northern hardwoods–White pine Forest		S4	n/a
	Low-elevation Bald	Three-toothed cinquefoil–Blueberry Low Summit Bald		S3	n/a

State Status*

- E** Endangered: Rare and in danger of being lost from the state in the foreseeable future, or federally listed as Endangered.
- T** Threatened: Rare and, with further decline, could become endangered; or federally listed as Threatened.
- SC** Special Concern: Rare in Maine, based on available information, but not sufficiently rare to be Threatened or Endangered.

**State status rankings are not assigned to natural communities.*

State Rarity Rank

- S1** Critically imperiled in Maine because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres).
- S2** Imperiled in Maine because of rarity (6–20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of other factors making it vulnerable to further decline.
- S3** Rare in Maine (on the order of 20–100 occurrences).
- S4** Apparently secure in Maine.
- S5** Demonstrably secure in Maine.

Global Rarity Rank

- G1** Critically imperiled globally because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer occurrences or very few remaining individuals or acres) or because some aspect of its biology makes it especially vulnerable to extirpation.
- G2** Globally imperiled because of rarity (6–20 occurrences or few remaining individuals or acres) or because of other factors making it vulnerable to further decline.
- G3** Globally rare (on the order of 20–100 occurrences).
- G4** Apparently secure globally.
- G5** Demonstrably secure globally.